

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 MCT-01 /047 W
-----201850Z 029006 /42
R 201550Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9024
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DUBLIN 859

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EI
SUBJ: SOME PARTING AND PARENTHETICAL THOUGHTS ON THE
NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM

1. FOLLOWING OUR POLICY ASSESSMENT (DUBLIN 713), WHICH CONCLUDES THAT OUR MAJOR ISSUE HERE IS THE NORTHERN IRELAND CRISIS AND ITS RAMIFICATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC, IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND AS A RELATIVELY SMALL BUT POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE IN THE U.S., I AM SUBMITTING FURTHER COMMENT ON THE PROBLEM WHICH MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN ASSESSING THE SITUATION. IN THESE SPECULATIONS I DO NOT PRESUME THAT MY VIEW FROM DUBLIN HAS EITHER PRECEDENCE OR PRESCIENCE OVER OUR COLLEAGUES IN BELFAST OR LONDON.

2. MY OWN CONTINUOUS OBSERVATION OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEMS REACHES BACK THREE DECADES. THE CURRENT CHAPTER OF THE PAINFUL SAGA STARTED NINE YEARS AGO, AND IS MAINLY A REKINDLING OF THE SAME FLAMMABLE INGREDIENTS. HOWEVER, THE FESTER IS NOW A BOIL. HOW AND BY WHOM IT WILL BE LANCED IS THE ISSUE. THE INTRACTABILITY OF THE PROBLEM REMAINS THE FRUSTRATING REALITY.

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3. IN MY VIEW, A RELATIVELY NEW IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION HAS ALSO GROWN INTO THE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION IN THE LAST TEN YEARS. IT IS BARELY ACKNOWLEDGED, AND RARELY DISCUSSED IN PERSPECTIVE. BUT IT IS A FACT, AND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY US.

4. VIEW FROM THE U.S.: THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM

IS SCANTILY UNDERSTOOD IN THE U.S. WHILE THERE HAS, IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, BEEN SOME ENLIGHTENMENT WITHIN THE IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOUT MISGUIDED SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISIONAL IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY (PIRA), THERE REMAINS A FUNDAMENTAL LACK OF GRASP. THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE IRISH/BRITISH SITUATION IN ULSTER ARE MATCHED ONLY BY THE IGNORANCE OF IT AMONG MANY IN THE U.S.--OFFICIALLY AND PRIVATELY--WHO SEEK AN INSTANT SOLUTION.

5. NEW LOOK AT MOTIVATIONS: THE INTRICACIES OF THE PROBLEM AND THE NUMBING VIOLENCE THAT CONTINUES TO CHARACTERIZE THE CONTENTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE TENDED TO OBSCURE SOME BASIC POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS--NOT INTRINSICALLY RELATED TO THE SECTARIAN POLARIZATION--THAT COULD HAVE A DIRECT BEARING ON THE U.S. ASSESSMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO REMIND OURSELVES OF THESE MOTIVATIONS SO THAT THE FULL DIMENSIONS OF THE STRUGGLE IN ULSTER ARE SEEN IN CLEAR FOCUS. UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO OVERSIMPLIFYING THE SITUATION INTO A BLACK/WHITE SCENE, WITHOUT SERIOUSLY STUDYING THE MOTIVATIONS OF THE VARIOUS FACTIONS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE MOTIVATIONS.

6. PIRA: THIS REPUBLICAN GROUP, WHICH MUST BE RECOGNIZED AS A MAJOR INSURGENT FORCE AND A PRIME ELEMENT IN THE PROBLEM, HAS STATED OPENLY THAT ITS MAJOR ULTIMATE AIM IS A UNITED, SOCIALIST, FEDERAL STATE OF IRELAND WITH ALL VESTIGES OF WESTMINSTER RULE
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EJECTED. THE AMORPHOUS PIRA IDEOLOGY ENVISAGES, AFTER BRITISH WITHDRAWAL, DISSOLUTION OF THE PRESENT DUBLIN GOVERNMENT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A STATE WHICH WOULD CONSIST OF FOUR LOOSELY COORDINATED REGIONS BASED ON THE ANCIENT FOUR KINGDOMS OF IRELAND. ITS SPOKESMEN DISCOUNT COMPLETELY THE PERTINENCE OF THE PIRA'S LACK OF PUBLIC SUPPORT; THEY ADHERE FIRMLY TO THE THEORY THAT A PUBLIC MANDATE IS IRRELEVANT SINCE THE RIGHTNESS OF THE CAUSE JUSTIFIES THE MEANS.

7. BEYOND THE PIRA: IT IS WORTHWHILE THINKING ABOUT OTHER SMALLER GROUPS WHICH HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE MISCHIEF AND, IF THE ISLAND DETERIORATES INTO INSTABILITY, COULD PERHAPS HAVE SIGNIFICANT IF NOT CRUCIAL ROLES. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE IS THE "OFFICIAL" SINN FEIN/IRA (OIRA) LATELY RENAMED AS SINN FEIN PEOPLES' PARTY. ALTHOUGH FAIRLY WELL ATTENUATED IN NORTHERN IRELAND INsofar AS WE SEE THE PICTURE, THIS GROUP REMAINS RATHER VOCAL IN THE REPUBLIC, AND WILL

FIELD SOME CANDIDATES IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION. THE OIRA SEEMS TO BE DOMINATED BY DOCTRINAIRE MARXISTS, AND I HAVE SUSPICION WITHOUT SUPPORT THAT IT GETS QUIET FUNDS FROM THE SOVIET UNION. ITS LEADERS ARE A HETEROGENOUS COLLECTION OF IRISH ORIGINALS AND I WOULD NOT SUPPOSE THAT THERE IS ANY REAL DIRECT CONTROL FROM MOSCOW; NEVERTHELESS, THE ORGANIZATION IS BASICALLY DEDICATED TO THE OVERTHROW OF THE "CAPITALIST" SYSTEM. IT HAS A NUMBER OF CLEVER AND INTELLIGENT LEADERS, AND CERTAIN APPEAL AMONG STUDENTTS. IT ALSO HAS QUITE LEGITIMATE "REPUBLICAN" ROOTS, THOUGH IT HAS FOR SOME YEARS ESCHEWED VIOLENCE AS ITS MEAN TO THE END.

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INR-07 NSAE-00 MCT-01 /047 W
-----201849Z 028811 /42

R 201550Z APR 77
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8. IN NUMBERS THE IRISH COMMUNIST PARTY (ICP) IS SECOND TO THE OFFICIALS, AND ALSO MAY RECEIVE SOME FUNDS VERY DISCREETLY FROM THE KGB. HOWEVER, I DISMISS THIS GROUP FOR THE MOMENT AS AN AGING STALINIST COTERIE WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE MISSED THE MAIN STREAM IN IRISH AFFAIRS. THERE ARE A FEW ODD LABOR LEADERS IN THE PARTY, BUT BY AND LARGE, IT SEEMS TO BE A FOSSIL.

9. A TINY BUT DEDICATED OFFSHOOT OF THE OFFICIAL IRA IS THE IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY (IRSP), WHICH APPARENTLY HAS A TERRORIST WING THAT HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR A NUMBER OF ATROCITIES. THIS GROUP SEEMS TO BE WANING OF LATE, THOUGH OUR CONTACTS IN THE IRISH GOVERNMENT GIVE IT HIGH POTENTIAL. THIS GROUP IS SO UNDER-

GROUND THAT WE CANNOT IDENTIFY IT AS MAOIST, TROTSKYIST, MOSCOWIST OR WHATEVER. THE LITTLE INFORMATION WE HAVE ON IT INDICATES A KIND OF RED GUARD/ANARCHIST IDENTIFY. SO FAR THIS IS MERELY A PIN-PRICK ORGANIZATION, BUT UNFORTUNATELY WITH VIOLENT POTENTIAL.

10. LOYALIST GROUPS: THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES OF THE ULSTER PROTESTANT BODIES ARE SEEN AS LESS CLEARLY DEFINED FROM HERE -- APART FROM THEIR INTRANSIGENCE
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AND THEIR DEDICATION TO DOMINANCE OVER THE CATHOLIC MINORITY. HOWEVER, THE PROTESTANT PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS -- INTER ALIA, THE ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (UDA) AND THE ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCES (UVF) SEEM TO SHARE WITH THE PIRA AN ESPOUSAL OF TERRORIST TACTICS WHICH ARE PROVOCATIVELY SIMILAR.

11. SOVIET ASPECT: WE HAVE NO TANGIBLE EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY, OR THE KGB IN OTHER GUISES, IS MEDDLING IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION. THE EVIDENCE TO DATE INDICATES THE CONTRARY, I.E., THE SOVIETS SEEM TO HAVE DECIDED THEY HAVE MORE TO GAIN IN OVERTLY WOOING THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT, AND NOT TAKING CHANCES ON COMPLICATING USSR/UK RELATIONS, THAN TO PUT AN OAR IN A UNIQUE CRISIS WHICH HAS LITTLE POTENTIAL AS A CLASSICAL COMMUNIST OPPORTUNITY FOR GAINING INFLUENCE ON ANY SIDE.

12. TO CARRY A SUSPICION INTO CONJECTURE, HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO ASCERTAIN THE EXTENT OF THE KGB'S COVERT CONTACTS WITH AND SUPPORT OF IRISH TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS -- IN PARTICULAR, THE PIRA, IRSP, UDA AND THE UVF. IT IS PROBABLY NAIVE TO THINK THERE IS NO CONNECTION, AND POSSIBLY PARANOIC TO ASSUME THAT THERE IS A WELL-GEARED MASTER PLAN.

13. THE SILENT QUESTION: THE VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND APPEARS RECENTLY LIKE THE THRASHINGS OF A BLIND MONSTER. IT IS CERTAIN THAT MOST OF THOSE WHO CARRY IT OUT ARE MINDLESSLY DEDICATED TO SIMPLE AD HOC OBJECTIVES. BUT THE LEADERS WHO PLAN AND COMMAND TERRORISM ARE IDEOLOGUES AS WELL AS TRAINED STRATEGISTS. IT WOULD BE WELL FOR US TO BEAR THIS IN MIND WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DESPERATE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION, AND THE POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ITS SOLUTION.
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14. THE NEW DIMENSION IN ULSTER HAS AN IDEOLOGICAL
INGREDIENT. WHETHER OR NOT THE FESTERED BOIL IN THIS
TINY AREA HAS ASPECTS OF COMMUNIST/FREE WORLD
CONFRONTATION IS TO BE DETERMINED AND WHETHER IT
MATTERS IS STILL THE LARGER QUESTION. CURLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMUNITY RELATIONS, PERSONAL OPINION, TERRORISM, CIVIL DISORDERS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMMUNIST DOCTRINE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770439/aaaabhor.tel
Line Count: 233
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2752599
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOME PARTING AND PARENTHETICAL THOUGHTS ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM
TAGS: PINT, EI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/88952aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009